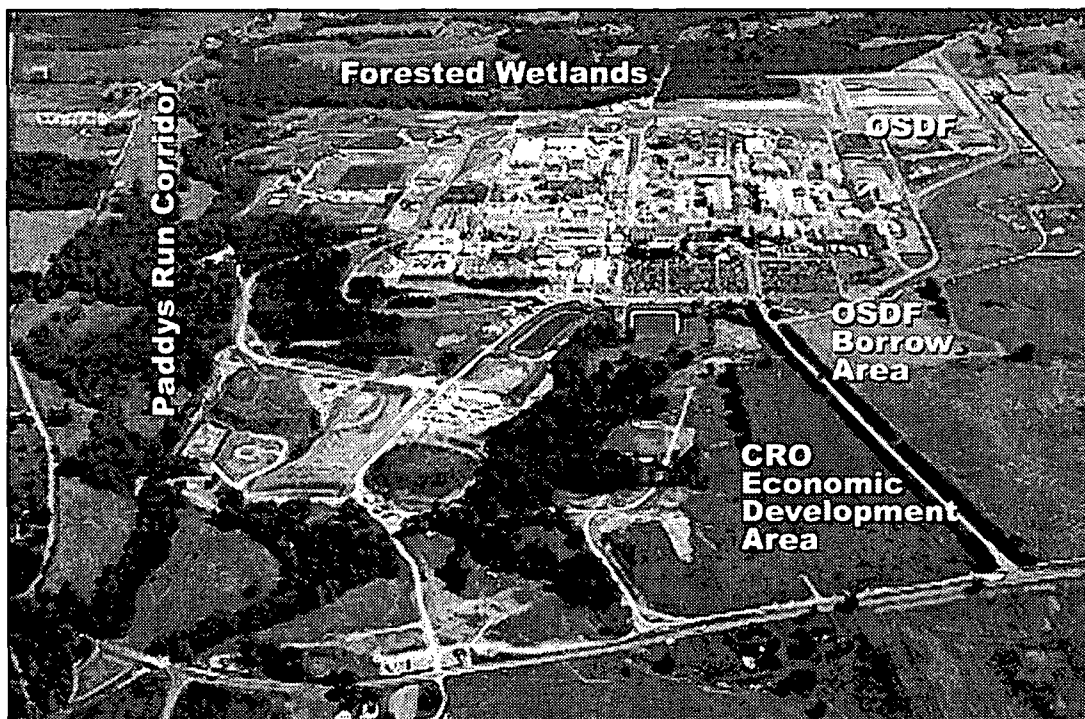


Request For Input On Final Land Use *of the Fernald site*

1690



DOE is seeking stakeholder input on the proposed final land use of the Fernald Site (6924-1).

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) requests input from stakeholders regarding the final land use of the 1,050 acre Fernald site. Public input on final land use is needed now so DOE can plan and integrate remediation and any required site restoration activities. This fact sheet describes how the public can become involved in the decision process.

WHAT'S BEEN DONE SO FAR

Finalization of Records of Decision

DOE and the regulators have jointly signed Records of Decision (RODs) which specify the remediation requirements for each major cleanup project, but do not establish specific land uses for the site. The RODs commit DOE to: continued ownership of the Fernald site once cleanup is complete; maintenance and monitoring of the On-Site Disposal Facility (OSDF); removal of all buildings, structures and above-grade and below-grade utilities; and excavation of a large volume of contaminated soil and waste.

Fernald Citizens Advisory Board Recommendations

In March 1996, the Fernald Citizens Advisory Board (FCAB), formerly the Fernald Citizens Task Force, presented its general final land use recommendations to DOE. The FCAB recommended that DOE exclude residential and agricultural land uses from consideration and protect and enhance existing natural resources, such as Paddys Run, wetlands and endangered species habitat. The FCAB also recommended that DOE involve local stakeholders in final land use decisions.

Fernald Community Reuse Organization Activities

In March 1998, with the concurrence of DOE, the Fernald Community Reuse Organization (CRO) began investigating the potential market demand for economic development of 23 acres in the southern portion of the Fernald site. DOE will consider the results of the CRO's study in future land use decisions.

Fernald Natural Resource Trustees

CERCLA and the National Contingency Plan require certain federal and state officials to act on behalf of the public as trustees for natural resources. The trustees determine if natural resources have been injured due to the release of hazardous substances, and if so, can require compensation for the damages. Negotiations between DOE and the Fernald Natural Resource Trustees have been underway for the past several years. The Fernald Natural Resource Trustees include DOE, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the State of Ohio, which is represented by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). In 1986, the State of Ohio filed a \$206 million suit against DOE for injury to natural resources. In April 1998, the trustees reached a tentative settlement to the lawsuit that calls for natural resource restoration of approximately 875 acres of the site and adoption of a public education project on groundwater protection. The trustees have developed a draft *Natural Resource Restoration Plan* (NRRP) which outlines the proposed natural resource restoration projects for the site. DOE will not finalize any agreement without public input and involvement in the decision process.

DOE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

DOE has developed a preferred alternative for final land use at Fernald based on the FCAB recommendations, the CRO land use investigation, and the tentative agreement among the Natural Resource Trustees. Under the preferred alternative, DOE will reserve the 23-acre plot for potential economic development and the 115-acre area for the OSDF, and will allocate the remaining portion of the site for natural resource restoration. The restored habitat will include forests, tallgrass prairie, wetlands, and open water. The reburial of Native American remains could also be integrated with the restoration projects. Soil remediation will be conducted in 10 phases. DOE and Fluor Daniel Fernald will also conduct restoration in phases after soil remediation is complete and the areas have been certified clean. DOE will retain ownership of the property after the site is restored.

Implementability

This alternative provides an opportunity for DOE to use large excavated tracts that will be left after cleanup. This approach will also create habitat (e.g., lakes or ponds), and reduce the cost of backfilling these areas.

State of Ohio's Natural Resource Claim

Restoration of the Fernald site would resolve the existing \$206 million lawsuit the State of Ohio has against DOE. This would become the first such settlement at any DOE site.

Consistency with FCAB Recommendations

The preferred alternative is consistent with the final land use recommendations because it precludes agricultural and residential uses. All existing natural and cultural resources would be preserved and enhanced.

Potential for Economic Development

The preferred alternative makes a portion of the site available for potential economic development which could accommodate commercial, retail, or light industrial development, if there is interest.

Resolution of DOE Natural Resource Liability

Restoration of approximately 875 acres of the Fernald site would compensate for the past natural resource injuries that have occurred. In addition, DOE avoids the potential liability that may be associated with other land uses.

Other Natural Resource Compliance Requirements

Restoration of the site would also resolve other natural resource mitigation requirements under the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Operable Unit 5 ROD.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public will have an opportunity to provide input to DOE on potential final land use options for the Fernald site. In parallel with the release of the NRRP, DOE will issue an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a 30-day public comment period beginning Sept. 21. The EA summarizes the NRRP and presents DOE's preferred alternative. The EA will be available on Fernald's Web Site (www.fernald.gov) and in the Public Environmental Information Center (PEIC), 10995 Hamilton Cleves Highway.

The Natural Resource Trustees will hold a public workshop to discuss the NRRP on Sept. 23 at 6:30 p.m. in the Alpha Building, 10967 Hamilton Cleves Highway. DOE will hold a public hearing on final land use at the Oct. 13 Cleanup Progress Briefing (location to be announced). Stakeholders can submit oral or written comments to DOE at the hearing or during the public comment period.

For More Information...

Please direct questions or comments to Gary Stegner, Public Information Director, U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box 538705, Cincinnati, Ohio 45253-8705, (513) 648-3153 or E-mail Gary_Stegner@fernald.gov.